

JAN 20 2000

Statement for U.S. EPA Hearing on 1/20/00 in St. Louis, MO regarding the  
Environmental Impact Statement for a Radioactive Waste Repository at Yucca Mountain

My name is Daniel Berg and I live at 5 Cedar Crest, St. Louis, MO 63132. I am a fourth year medical student at Washington University Medical School in St. Louis. I oppose the transportation of high level nuclear waste through the St. Louis metropolitan region.

An accident involving a truck or train carrying nuclear wastes could expose large numbers of people in the St. Louis area to radiation, leading to a major public health disaster. Through direct mutagenic effects on human DNA, as well as through other mechanisms such as the creation of superoxides, radiation exposure leads to an increased risk of cancer, birth defects and other human health problems.

Epidemiological data from Japanese atomic bomb survivors show significant increases in leukemia, esophageal cancer, stomach cancer, colon cancer, lung cancer, female breast cancer, ovarian cancer, urinary tract cancer, multiple myeloma and thyroid cancer. More recent research from people living in areas downwind of Chernobyl at the time of the nuclear accident there, demonstrates a dramatic rise in childhood thyroid cancer among exposed populations. [ If large numbers of people were exposed to ionizing radiation following a motor vehicle accident, St. Louis would suffer greatly.

Using Interstate 70 as a transportation corridor for the shipping of high level nuclear wastes could lead to disaster in the event of a motor vehicle accident. Railways which pass through St. Louis pose similar risks. For this reason, I oppose the plan as outlined in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement Summary, and encourage the EPA to find an alternative solution, such as converting current interim storage sites into permanent sites. [ I also urge the EPA to mandate an end to the creation of more nuclear waste. ]